

**PENDING CLAIMS:**

1. (Canceled)
2. (Canceled)
3. (Canceled)
4. (Canceled)
5. (Canceled)
6. (Canceled)
7. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 11 wherein said at least one function provided as part of said object includes electronic messaging with said business contact.
8. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 11 wherein said object can be relocated to a desktop.
9. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 8 wherein said object on a desktop remains in communication with a server and is able to receive data from said server for updating messages, servers, or links associated with said object.
10. (Canceled)
11. (Previously Presented) A method of providing interactive bi-directional connections between a business contact and a client comprising:
  - providing to a client a persistent interactive graphic object configured to establish an interactive, bi-directional connection between said client and a business contact;
  - providing, as part of said graphic object, at least one function that can be performed by said client; and
  - transmitting information from said business contact to said persistent interactive graphic object.

12. (Previously presented) A computer based method for providing interactive bi-directional communication between a business contact and a client comprising[.];

providing to a client a persistent interactive graphic object configured to establish contact between said client and business contact[.]; and

wherein said interactive object is capable of interfacing with at least two (2) computer programs on a single computer.

13. (New) The computer based method of Claim 12, wherein one computer program is an electronic mail program.

14. (New) The computer-based method of Claim 12 wherein said graphic object is at least partially controlled by at least one other computer.

15. (New) The computer based method of Claim 13 wherein said at least one other computer can change content within at least one computer program.

16. (New) A computer based method for providing a communications link between a business and a customer comprising the steps of:

providing a persistent graphic interactive object that includes a tracking component, a communications component, and a security component on a host computer;

allowing said customer to download said graphic object to a customer computer;

displaying said graphic object for customer to view;

linking said host computer to said customer computer via said graphic object;

and

establishing bi-directional communication with said customer using said link.

17. (New) The method of claim 16 further comprising the step of allowing said customer to use a pre-existing program on said computer to communicate with said business.
18. (New) The method of claim 17, wherein said computer program is an electronic mail program.
19. (New) The method of Claim 16 wherein said communications component allows a business to automatically update content within a pre-existing program on said customer's computer.
20. (New) The method of Claim 16 wherein said tracking component, communications component and, security component can be used interchangeably on a customer's computer.
21. (New) The method of claim 17 further comprising the step of linking at least two customer computers to each other via said host computer.